

Dear Members of the Committee of Education for the CT General Assembly;

I am Susan T. Dinnocenti, Ph.D., a resident of Bridgeport, CT, an assistant professor of education at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT, and the co-president elect for the Connecticut Association for the Gifted (CAG). In addition, I have been mentored by Dr. Joseph Renzulli, Dr. Sally Reis, and Dr. E. Jean Gubbins who were my advisors when I worked as a research associate at the National Research Center for the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT) in Storrs, CT from 1997-2001.

My purpose in this writing is to support Raised Bill 1000 and praise Senator Toni Boucher and her colleagues of the Education Committee for being proactive in presenting a Bill that introduces a legislative crosswalk for early high school (HS) graduation to those 11th grade/juniors who have demonstrated HS mastery through state approved summative learning benchmarks and assessments.

As a professor in a teacher educator program I can sadly confirm that many of our in-service and pre-service teachers are currently teaching or becoming certified with little to no knowledge of how to work with high-ability learners at any age level. Daily, our brightest and most inquiring k-12 learners from every neighborhood, culture, and race are being challenged only if they are lucky enough to have a teacher who has been trained in pedagogy that raises achievement for all children.

Personally, I don't believe that a child's luck should be the standard for creating the lifelong contributing learners and citizens that our state of CT strives to produce. When a child with innate high intellectual abilities and demonstrated profound inquisitive strengths has to hope to go 12 for 12 in a public school system so their potential can be nurtured and realized, then we must reassess our methodology of schooling and present some new options to better their chances of growth – Raised Bill 1000 provides one new option. I would suggest a Bill to mandate teacher education programs provide training on high ability pedagogy be another option.

The education committee recognizes that our most intelligent minds need a higher ceiling to reach for; an early exit from HS may be that height that a "drop-out" would "stay in" to attain. Aside from becoming a motivating factor for HS students, Raised Bill 1000 presents an essential opportunity for school districts to create higher level learning paths from freshman year on which will reinforce the need for our teachers to be brought up to speed on pedagogy which embraces and challenges all learners. Raised Bill 1000, does not stand alone as it will be complimented by two organizations that can provide awareness, professional development, and assistance to our schools; the NRC/GT and CAG will ensure that professional development on best practices will be provided.

There are too many young children who become drop-out statistics in education and never reach their potential. Tuning out on learning before one is 18 is a national tragedy; however, CT can lessen the nation's numbers by providing a reason to stay engaged at every level.

I thank Sen. Boucher and her colleagues in the Education Committee for their vision and I strongly support Raised Bill 1000.

Respectfully submitted, Susan T. Dinnocenti, Ph.D.

Susan T. Dinnocenti, ACC, Ph.D.
Creator - Enrich Your Child
Life Coaching for Kids, Teens, Adults!!

Ph: 203 536-5496

www.enrichyourchild.com

Thought for the month:

“And the day came when the risk to
remain tight in a bud was more
painful than the risk it took to
blossom.”

~ Anaïs Nin